



Dear OFFLU Collaborator,

I am sure that you will be aware of the recent cases of influenza A infection in humans in Mexico, US and several other countries. At this stage infection with this newly identified strain of H1N1 appears to be limited to humans and viral gene sequencing shows that it contains genes of porcine, avian and human origin.

The human and animal health networks will be working together very closely to understand the origins of this H1N1 strain and to minimise risks to human and potential risks to animal health. The mandate of OFFLU has until now been limited to avian influenza viruses. However, it is important that this is extended to cover all animal influenza viruses where scientific evidence demonstrates a public health concern.

It is the responsibility of OFFLU to ensure that information about animal influenza viruses is shared quickly and efficiently within the animal health network and that relevant information is shared through OFFLU with WHO. OFFLU Scientists are available to work on sequence and other virus characterisation analyses.

I should be most grateful if you would respond to the OFFLU Secretariat at OIE offlu@oie.int and copy to OFFLU contacts: Keith Hamilton (k.hamilton@oie.int) and Gwenaëlle Dauphin (Gwenaelle.Dauphin@fao.org) with the following information.

- Any information that you have that you think is relevant to animal investigations.
- Information on recent (12 months or more) influenza A viruses and strains that you hold at your laboratory that you consider to be relevant to the investigations and analyses.
- Your willingness to participate in expert discussions with international animal and human health organisations.
- Names and contact details of veterinary experts that you know with relevant swine influenza expertise.

Further technical questions may arise as the situation develops.

Thank you for your continued support of OFFLU's activities.

Kind regards,
Steve Edwards (Chairman of OFFLU)